



WOMEN

Lutheran World Federation

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Newsletter No. 2

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Dear Sisters,

Hello again from the LWF Women's Desk!

First of all let me thank you for all the interest you have shown in our newsletter. Thank you for all the letters that have reached our desk supporting this newly started simple means of communication. It is great to know that women all over the world share common concerns and that their lot in other parts of our globe is of interest to women everywhere.

Our special thanks to those who have shared their plans for International Women's Year with us. However, it seems that there are more women in need of ideas than in a position of sharing them with others. In this issue

you will find some examples of ideas. We hope that they will help you in creating your own programme which will be especially meaningful for your own particular situation.

In our Geneva office the beginning of IWY was marked by the first convening of the Advisory Committee for Women's Work within the LWF. This event introduces a new stage in the development of our work and we are all very happy about it. We hope, that you will share our joy. In this newsletter you will find our press release about the first meeting of this Advisory Committee outlining the goals and tasks of this Women's Desk. We would be happy, if you could react to those outlines by giving us your comments and suggestions.

May I now repeat that we are waiting to hear about your plans for IWY, about your work in your women's groups, or about the life and work of women within your church. Share this information with us, so that we can share it with others!

At present I am again travelling in Asia to work out the plans for leadership development seminars in this area together with the Lutheran women in Asia. I will share my impressions with you in our next newsletter.

Wishing you every success with your plans for IWY and looking forward to hearing from you,

Shalom,

Yours,

Eva Zabolai-Csekme

Asian Women decide on Priorities

The Fifth Assembly of the Asian Church Women's Conference met in Bangkok from 18th - 24th October 1974 where 110 leading church women from 19 Asian countries and from international Christian organisations were present. At this meeting the following issues were recognised as the most urgent ones for Asia:

1. HUNGER AND POVERTY

Where death by starvation of millions of people in the Indian Sub-Continent is imminent in the near future;

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where improper food habits and lack of proper and sufficient diet is retarding the mental development of the present generation of children of the Indian Sub-Continent;

A N D

where some churches have been callously indifferent to this fact of starvation, we urge the churches of the Sub-Continent of India and particularly the women's groups in each church to:

- a. include the issue of starvation and malnutrition in the agenda of church conferences, executive committees, women's groups, etc., to make the church members aware of their responsibility and action;
- b. carry out the programme of education and action in collaboration with the existing government and church agencies which have the literature and the technical know-how;
- c. make use of mass media such as newspapers, radio, television and cinema screens to keep the public informed of the continuing urgency of the programme to combat starvation;
- d. give priority to the following in education and action programmes:
 - (1) new and simple ways of storing food and grain;
 - (2) new food habits and new and economical ways of preparing food;

- (3) productive use of all unused church land;
- (4) crash programmes in the use of soya bean products;
- (5) allocation of funds by the churches and women's groups for carrying out this programme;

A N D

we urge our friends in other countries to continue to pray for the churches and people in the Indian Sub-Continent and to actively support creative programmes which offer some hope for the future.

2. EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

In countries where women and girls are employed in industry, working conditions, protection and security require the most urgent investigation and enforcement of the labour legislation;

A N D

where the increase and promotion of the tourist industry, while providing employment, exploits young women for pleasure and profit, we urge the churches and women's groups faced with this problem to actively protest in ways open to them.

3. INJUSTICE AND INEQUALITY FOR WOMEN IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Where women have suffered from injustice and inequality in relation to position and decision-making in church and government and other institutions of society, we call on church leaders at the world, regional and local levels to change their structures in order to allow for greater participation of qualified women in the leadership of the churches.

We consider that within the present society, there are many instances of structured injustices against women and we invite efforts to overcome these by providing legislation which will eliminate this discrimination;

A N D

we have become aware that with Australia and New Zealand, migrant families and women in particular have suffered from isolation in the community.

We, therefore, resolve that churches in these societies study seriously the migrant situation and act accordingly to raise the standard of living, education and literacy of such migrant families.

4. LEADERSHIP CRISIS

As we consider that in the Asian churches there is a great shortage of leadership both among men and women, we resolve in this next quadrennium to give high priority to the holding of leadership training workshops in regional areas of Asia to equip our women to become more aware of the events around them and to obtain the skills necessary to express themselves on vital issues.

5. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

As 1975 has been designated International Women's Year by the United Nations, we urge the women's groups throughout Asia to observe this year by putting into operation some of these issues.

Ms. K. Davies
Assembly Secretary

Ms. Esther T. Bautista
Chairperson

In view of the fact that church women's activities among the Indonesian LWF member churches have remained unchanged over the past number of years, we must ask ourselves if we need to be more outspoken in order to improve the present situation.

The following is an outline of some of the activities that are carried out by the church women. In addition, we submit several proposals which may be used by adapting them to suit the particular local needs. It is necessary that these proposals be realised as soon as possible so as to avoid being left at the bottom of this modern, rapidly progressing age. Our country also needs women to help work out its problems just as much as women are expected to render service to their country on the local, national and international levels.

Nowadays new living patterns and new ideas can be envisaged more realistically taking into consideration the cultural heritage of a given country and its Christian religion.

Church Women's Activities in Indonesia

For a long time women in Indonesia have actively supported their churches in carrying out programmes put forward by the synods. Even before World War II they used to meet for Bible study which was conducted by pastors or laypersons, and they have also been active in collecting funds for various institutions. Almost anywhere in Indonesia it is women who do social work making no distinction between members of their church and non-Christians.

They take a vivid interest and are actively involved in programmes which have been set up by the Government, e.g.

- Family Planning
- Maternity - Child, Medical Clinics, Welfare
- Kindergardens
- Orphanages

Besides the already existing and on-going programmes, there are some concrete plans for more projects which, however, cannot yet be implemented due to lack of finances. Some examples are:

- 1) Accommodation of children from disrupted homes;
- 2) Magazine for women;

The latter will help to establish a better understanding between Christian and non-Christian women. We could therefore call it the "Women's Liberation" magazine. We plan to bring articles especially designed to reach women in rural areas on how to improve living conditions. Also included will be articles on child care, counselling, dressmaking, fashion design, how to build houses, gardening, etc.

- 3) Assisting the Government by giving agricultural training to farmers including the use of modern tools to increase productivity;
- 4) Educating and training women and men for leadership within the church;
- 5) Training women in rendering counselling services to drug addicts. (The increasing abuse of drugs poses a serious problem, especially among the youth, in the large cities of Indonesia.)

In closing I would like to point out the importance of cooperation among one another, for it is only in working together that we will find real fulfillment in our work.

Anita F. Tobing

INTERNATIONAL

WOMEN'S

YEAR

1975

In response to our request in Newsletter No. 1, the women of the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (T.E.L.C.)/India have shared with us their plan for a WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP PROJECT for 1975 which focuses on the central theme of this year:

EQUALITY - DEVELOPMENT - and PEACE

I. ON THE CHURCH LEVEL

(1) Community Centres

The Church Council of the T.E.L.C. is planning to develop Community Centres in six big towns and cities like Madras, Tiruchirappalli, Bangalore, Madurai, Coimbatore and Virudhunagar to provide social work in urban areas.

Making use of this opportunity, the T.E.L.C. women plan to request the Church Council

- (a) to make the services of these Community Centres available to women and young girls in urban areas, by including such programmes as would be of special help to them;
- (b) to make use of the voluntary services of Women's Fellowship members in their social service programme, wherever possible.

(2) Counselling Centre

The T.E.L.C. women plan to request the Church Council to start a Counselling Centre to provide family and vocational guidance, either in a central place or to attach Counselling Centres to the Community Centres which are being planned.

II. ON THE CONGREGATIONAL LEVEL

(1) Adult Literacy Classes

It is planned to request the T.E.L.C. women to start adult literacy classes in at least 10 slum areas near towns like Tambaram, Pudukottai, Thanjavur, Mayuram, Porayer, Subramaniapuram (Trichy), Dindigul, Usilampatti, Pollachi, Pattukkottai, to help women to better their way

of living by overcoming the evils of illiteracy, hunger and poverty.

This programme would include:

- (a) Functional literacy and numeracy
- (b) Basic principles of health and hygiene
- (c) Balanced diet and economic ways of preparing food
- (d) Preparing family budgets
- (e) Mother and child care
- (f) Small handicrafts
- (g) Mending and making clothes

NOTE: (a) Staff

As far as possible, the voluntary services of the Women's Fellowship members and honorary services of lady doctors, nurses, social workers and teachers should be made available.

(b) Expenses

Initial and running expenses for aid, etc. should be met from donations and gifts from individuals, Women's Fellowship groups and the church.

III. ON THE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP GROUP LEVEL

It is planned to request each Women's Fellowship group to cooperate with other women's groups (National Federation of Indian Women or women's groups of other churches) in their programme of activities for International Women's Year 1975.

Siron Athisayam
Secretary

News from Norway

The Bishops' meeting of the Church of Norway, taking place twice a year, appointed a working group on Church and Women in November 1974. The task of this group is to:

- give a revue of a Christian view of the woman, in light of Creation and Salvation, equality and solidarity,
- view the attitude to women in the Church during the centuries up to our time,
- state where a change in this attitude would be appropriate,
- view the position of women in marriage, profession, home and community,
- value the premises for a cooperation between Church and Feminism,
- propose practical attitudes on behalf of the Church, regarding female identity (married, unmarried and divorced women), on women as partners in the life and work of the Church, on the official family policy (including housing, kindergardens, etc.), concerning the role system in modern society, and finally school and education creating attitudes and general behaviour.

"Kristent kvinnesaksforum", an ecumenical feminist group, was constituted in Oslo on 27th November 1974.

The Norwegian women's organisation, "New Feminists", during their national conference in Bodø in October 1974 decided to ask all their members and associates to withdraw their church membership in protest against the church's "Woman Policy".

The Advisory Committee of the LWF Women's Desk finished its first meeting on 26th January 1975. Present at this meeting were members of the Committee, consultants and staff: OKR Gudrun Diestel (Hanover, FRG), Ms. Sarah Kamala (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania), Dr. Dorothy J. Marple (Philadelphia, USA), Rev. Constance Parvey (Cambridge, USA), Dr. Gerta Scharffenorth (Heidelberg, FRG) and Ms. Rita Wang (Hong Kong); staff of the LWF Women's Desk: Ms. Christa Evans, Ms. Eva von Hertzberg and Rev. Eva Zabolai-Csekme.

Members of the Committee reported on the present situation of women in their respective areas. Ms. Rita Wang described the involvement of women in the life and work of the Lutheran Churches in Hong Kong. She pointed out that women in Hong Kong need to be more aware of their potentials and abilities to apply them in a more meaningful way. She also emphasised the need for more leadership development among women. One of the problems she mentioned is the lack of involvement of young women in women's organisations.

In her report about Tanzania, Ms. Sarah Kamala stated that the arrival of Christianity and Islam adversely affected the position of women in Africa. As an example she cited priesthood which in former times had naturally been granted to women but which with-

in African Christian tradition has been denied to them. Consequently the educated women of Tanzania are scarcely to be found within the church structures, whereas their presence in the political life is more noticeable. She realises that African women are conditioned into believing that they are incapable and calls the church to take an active role in freeing women from their own culturally inherited feelings of inferiority.

Advisory Committee

on Women

in the Church

Having recently returned from a ten-week visit to Asia, Rev. Eva Zabolai-Csekme reported that in all Lutheran churches she visited she found women to be the pillars of the congregations. Also in terms of finances, women are the major contributors. Contrary to that women are hardly

to be found on the decision-making level of the churches. She was impressed by the manifold potentials of Lutheran women in Asia and their readiness to re-examine their involvement in the life and work of their churches. She listed as major needs that were expressed to her: leadership development and international exchange among women.

On the basis of the reports that were given and the variety of experiences among the group, the Committee drafted a tentative outline of the objectives of LWF related work among women.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Give direction to women's work on the basis of needs of women in member churches and enable them to deal creatively with their felt and unfelt needs.
- 2) Enable women to use their gifts and capacities in their personal development and for the benefit of church and society.
- 3) Enable women to re-examine women's participation in the work of the church.
- 4) Enable women to become an integral part of the renewal of church and society.
- 5) Enable women to learn that their religious experience is part of God's revelation and to find instruments and ways to contribute through this to theological discourse.
- 6) Enable women to see social ministry not only as "ambulance" services but also in terms of prevention.
- 7) Foster the international community of Lutheran women and their ecumenical cooperation.
- 8) Help reveal and manifest on the basis of the new community begun in Christ the new partnership of women and men in church structures, family and community.

The following suggestions were made for consideration in drafting a preamble to the objectives:

PREAMBLE

- 1) Affirmation of our Christian faith which compels us to do women's work.
- 2) What is women's work: part of nature and mission of the church.
- 3) Scope - local, national, international.
- 4) Christ's salvation implies people as whole human beings.
- 5) Affirmation of our faith that God has created us equal, in the divine image with no barriers (sex, race, nation, etc.) to achieve our full humanity.
- 6) State our mandate through Commission on Studies for entire LWF.

Furthermore the Committee outlined its functions which include such tasks as providing a forum for the expression of the needs and concerns of women of LWF member churches, provide advice to the LWF Women's Desk, review and recommend proposals when needed and foster ecumenical relationships with other organisations with programmes related to women.

On January 24, the Advisory Committee on Women in the Church met with the Assembly Committee of the LWF in order to discuss the participation of women in the Sixth Assembly of the LWF.

The Advisory Committee expressed its strong conviction that women have a significant contribution to make to the life and work of their member churches and through them also to the work of the LWF. Full participation of women in the Sixth Assembly of the LWF in 1977 in all aspects of the Assembly is essential. The Committee believes that the Assembly should be a model of the new community begun in Jesus Christ expressing the full partnership of women and men. The LWF Advisory Committee for Women and the Women's Desk offer full support for enabling women to realise this partnership and to contribute effectively to the work of the Assembly. The Committee believes that preparation of women for the Assembly is absolutely essential and should begin on the local level and continue on the regional and international levels.

Much time was spent on outlining the future programmes of the LWF Women's Desk also as they relate to International Women's Year. It has been clear that LWF work in 1975 has to concentrate on the local and regional level. In all aspects of this work close co-operation is to be sought with other ecumenical organisations. This objective has been welcomed by representatives of the WCC (Ms. Brigalia Bam and Ms. Florence Addison) and the World YWCA (Ms. Katherine Strong) who participated in some parts of the meeting.

CONGRATULATIONS

to Ms. Smt. Lily Philip, Supervisor, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Air Force Station, Yelhanka, India, a dedicated Lutheran worker, who has been given the National Award for the best teacher for the year 1975 from among the 200 teachers in Central Schools in the country.

ALC Task Force

Ten persons have been appointed to a task force concerned for the full participation of women in the life of The American Lutheran Church (ALC). The task force, authorized by the ALC's 1974 convention, will monitor progress toward implementation of guidelines contained in a 1972 ALC-adopted statement on "Women and Men in Church and Society."

In addition the group will be asked to submit recommendations to the ALC Church Council pertaining to such subjects as:

- Women as ordained clergy;
- Effect of changing roles of pastors and their mates on the ministries of congregations;
- Vocational potential of women in professional church service;
- Recruitment of persons for congregational, conference, district and national boards and committees;
- ALC national office employment and personnel policies
- Increased frequency of divorce in American society;
- Effect of two-track vocations in parsonage families;
- Sexist language in ALC communication vehicles and other material.

Seven women and two men were appointed to the task force by the Executive Committee of the Church Council. They are:

- The Rev. William Adix, chaplain at Emmanuel Hospital, Portland, Ore.;
- Mr. Gary Berkland of Belmond, Iowa, an attorney;
- Ms. Bonnie Block of Green Bay, Wisc., a social worker who currently is director of volunteer services for Brown County;
- the Rev. Karen Bloomquist, pastor of Faith American Lutheran Church, Oakland, Calif.;
- also Ms. Elenor Emch of Silver Spring, Md., director of dietary services, Washington, D.C. General Hospital;
- Ms. Barbara Knutson, parish worker at First Lutheran Church, Fargo, North Dak.;
- Ms. Marian Nickelson of Belle Fourche, South Dak., a homemaker and member of the ALC's Board for Life and Mission in the Congregation;
- Ms. Mabel Sihler of Minneapolis, a widow who retired as a film distribution executive with Augsburg Publishing House;
- Ms. Leah Spann of Emden, Ill., a homemaker and Illinois District president of the American Lutheran Church Women;
- and Ms. Evelyn Streng, associate professor of science, Texas Lutheran College, Seguin.

"In freedom from traditional legalism and in freedom for mission and ministry to men and women," the 1972 ALC statement offered various "guidelines for action." Among the suggestions were "active steps to bring women significantly into leadership roles in the church," use of "generic terms which clearly connote humanity rather than gender," recruitment of more women for professional ministry, establishment of day care centers by congregations, programs to assist pastors and lay leaders in "understanding and accepting their own sexuality," and educational aids "for bringing about the recognition and acceptance of the rights, abilities and contributions of women to wholeness in the human community."

Present plans call for the task force to meet four times during 1975 and 1976. Ms. Carolyn Lindekugel, director of support services in the ALC's Office of Communication and Mission Support, will provide staff services to the group.

CONGRATULATIONS

to Ms. Freweini Teweldebrhan who has been appointed Secretary to the Mekane Yesus Addis Ababa congregation of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus in Ethiopia. It is for the first time in the history of the congregation, that the church elders have a lady officer amongst their members. We are sure that the work of the Mekane Yesus congregation will be enriched through Ms. Teweldebrhan's cooperation. For her future work we wish her God's blessing.

Scholarships 1975

- 1) Among the 131 applications received by the LWF Scholarship and Personnel Exchange Office there were 110 submitted by men and 21 by women. Out of the 56 scholarships granted 10 were given to women and 46 to men.

- 2) TO YOUR ATTENTION

Whereas the usual deadline for a scholarship application to reach the Geneva office is 1st November of each year, a second deadline of 1st April is possible for studies undertaken in countries of the southern hemisphere (Asia, Africa and Latin America).

- 3) The Governing Committee on the International Scholarship and Personnel Exchange Program of the LWF met in Geneva in January 1975. In his report to the Committee, the Secretary for Theological Education and Scholarship Strategy, Prof. Dr. Gyula Nagy, stressed that one of the major tasks of the Committee for the coming years should be:

".....a continued effort (to be made) to achieve the strategical aims given....."

Over two years ago a study project on "Women as Innovative Group" was begun in Germany. This project has been supported by the National Council of the Lutheran Churches in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Lutheran World Federation. Since the initial meeting, a number of church organisations, some universities as well as other groups have been asked to join in this project and have responded positively by sending experts (mainly women) to the preparatory meetings.

What is the aim of this study project?

It is aimed at identifying some crucial points in specific fields as to why women cannot live up to their full responsibility in the church. There

have been many efforts made by women's groups and individuals, in the past as well as in the present, which have had some innovative impact on church and society. Nevertheless, looking at our present situation, we can hardly be content with what has so far been achieved. This study project tries to find out those obstacles in the history of church and society which have resulted in equality for women developing so slowly.

The study project is divided into four main parts:

1. The theological studies pursue questions like: What was the role and importance of women in the original Christian communities? How were biblical statements concerning women understood and interpreted during past centuries and what was their influence on the life situation of the church?

2. A second section deals with questions of professional female church workers and volunteers in various services within the church. There, for instance, the emphasis is on conflicts in the working relations between congregation and church administration. Another question in this section identifies the problems in connection with the lack of women's representation in church management bodies on higher levels.

3. In the third part one study is devoted to examining the understanding of the role of women existing in text books and teaching materials used in religious education. An-

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other study focuses on the conscious and subconscious image of women as found in young people of both sexes due to their education and socialisation processes.

4. The last main part consists of some studies with regard to the function of women in the fields of labour and politics. The relation between the social function of the (mostly unpaid) housework done by housewives and the social function of the family is looked into.

As to the political question research is done on why women resist opportunities of leadership in political and other organisations.

This study project is considered a contribution to International Women's Year 1975, although the results will not be available in the near future.

Moreover, the group involved in this study project hopes very much to develop contact with other countries and churches where similar projects are carried out and to benefit from the mutual exchange of experiences and results.

For any further information please contact either one of the two women leading the study project in the Federal Republic of Germany:

- Dr. Gerta Scharffenorth, 69 Heidelberg, Schmeilweg 5
 - OKR Gudrun Diestel, 3 Hannover, Herrenhäuser Str. 2 A
- or the LWF Women's Desk in Geneva.

Eva von Hertzberg

The All India Council of Christian Women has decided to join in the celebration of International Women's Year 1975 with the national women's organisations. Christian women of India want to cooperate with other women's organisations in this great event.
